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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage September 5 on Taiwan's UN referendum; on the aftermath of President Chen Shui-bian's comment last week on the political bias of Taiwan's judiciary; on the upcoming APEC summit; and on a Taiwan business tycoon who donated NT15 billion [US\$454 million] to National Taiwan University for cancer research and treatment. The pro-independence "Liberty Times" ran a banner headline on page four that said "For the First Time, Hsieh [Says]: [I] Want to Run for the Presidency of the Nation of Taiwan." The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times," in the meantime, also ran an exclusive banner headline on page four that read "The United States Does Not Accept That Taiwan Is Part of the PRC."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" editorial called for efforts to manifest Taiwan and turn it into an independent sovereign state recognized by the international community. A separate "Liberty Times" op-ed warned that the recent remarks by high-ranking U.S. officials may turn the anti-U.S. sentiment in Taiwan into full-blown anti-Americanism. A "China Times" analysis, on the other hand, said the strongly-worded statements by the United States have not only hurt the Taiwan people's feelings but have done a favor both for President Chen and the Green camp. An op-ed in the pro-unification "United Daily News" said the Americans and the Taiwan independence forces have willingly colluded with each other for a long time, and that neither should complain about the other now. End summary.

A) "Manifest [the Fact That] Taiwan Is an Independent Sovereign State Recognized by the International Community"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] editorialized (9/5):

"U.S. White House National Security Council senior director for Asian affairs Dennis Wilder said recently: 'Taiwan or the Republic of China is not at this point a state in the international community,' and 'the Republic of China is an issue undecided, and it has been left undecided for many, many years.' A State Department official said the above-mentioned remarks do not represent any change in U.S. government policy, nor did the White House intend to send any message regarding a change in its policy. ... But even though the ROC has perished in the international community, its system remains haunting Taiwan, disabling the island from becoming a normal country. ... In other words, one can say that the crux of Taiwan's diplomatic predicament lies in the fact that it still fails to get rid of the ROC thoroughly, which has in fact been eliminated in the international community. ...

"Having understood this, we don't need to be disheartened by the remarks that 'Taiwan or the Republic of China is not at this point a state in the international community,' because, based on such a policy discourse of the United States, the ROC is a past tense that no longer exists, while Taiwan is walking toward future

possibilities. Taiwan, which has its own people, territory, government and sovereignty, is thus a complete nation with all the inner requirements intact. Taiwan, which holds elections regularly, has its own military, judicial and tax systems and budget, is thus a country that functions effectively. We can therefore say with full confidence that, compared with many of the 192 UN member nations, Taiwan is in possession of better qualifications to be regarded as a nation.

"The subject lying ahead of us now is how to manifest Taiwan, which has every element of being an independent sovereign state, and make it into an independent sovereign state recognized by the international community. ... For now, the first priority is to get rid of the ghost of the ROC via name change and the writing of a new constitution. In the meantime, we can enter the UN majestically using the rectified name ... and become a member nation of various international organizations.

"It is indeed difficult to seek other countries' recognition before Taiwan becomes a normal country. But Wilder's remarks made us see more clearly: Using the name ROC cannot help Taiwan become a normal country. On the contrary, it is viable, and we will surely be able to achieve our goal by having Taiwan, which has all the elements of a nation, to walk from its current state of independent sovereignty to a country recognized by the international community. From now on, anyone who does not want to be annexed by China without any reason and who values democracy and freedom must work together to safeguard Taiwan, which already has independent sovereignty."

B) "From Anti-U.S. Sentiments to Anti-Americanism"

Luo Chih-cheng, associate professor of political science at Soochow University and secretary-general of the Taiwan Society, opined in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] (9/5):

"... Washington standing together with China to counter Taiwan's efforts toward diplomatic breakthroughs will only deepen the Taiwan people's loathing and mistrust of Washington. Some opinion surveys done in Taiwan have already revealed such a signal. The Taiwan people's favorable feelings toward the United States are gradually declining, and in particular anti-U.S. sentiment is brewing. [Deputy Secretary of State] John Negroponte emphasized in his interview that the United States is Taiwan's best friend. But we must point out that Washington has often overlooked the fact that for a long time, Taiwan has been the United States' most reliable friend. The United States has blindly taken Taiwan's support for and coordination with it for granted but ignored Taiwan's assertions and appeals. Washington's opposition to Taiwan's UN referendum has reflected such an arrogant attitude.

"The biggest blind spot in the United States' Taiwan policy lies in its lack of knowledge of how to deal with Taiwan's democracy and the Taiwan people. Washington subjectively believes that it can change Taiwan's policy direction as long as it imposes pressure on Taiwan leaders. But this is a mistake Washington has constantly warned the Beijing authorities not to make. When Washington criticized that 'the push for the UN referendum is wrong,' it is not blaming Chen alone, but millions of Taiwan people who support the referendum. The view regarding drawing a line between A-Bian and the Taiwan people exactly showed the ignorance of the United States, the so-called 'big country of democracy.'

"The U.S. government's ignorance and arrogance described above will only result in more outrage and frustration toward the United States on the Taiwan people's part. Once anti-U.S. sentiment in Taiwan gradually grows into anti-Americanism, it will further affect Taiwan's strategic options, which will perhaps become the key to a structural change in Taiwan-U.S. relationship."

C) "Bian Playing the Campaigning Card Abroad, and It Works?"

Journalist Chiang Hui-chen noted in an analysis in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (9/1):

"... In terms of the already tense triangular relationship among Washington, Beijing and Taipei, the rights that Taiwan, as a democratic country, is entitled to, and the room it should enjoy

have long since been 'an inconvenient truth' for Washington. But the heavy blow that Washington dealt to Taiwan [i.e. Wilder's remarks] has not only stepped on the 'red line' of the Taiwan people's feelings, but also imperceptibly helped Bian resolve his problem and all the more, done a favor for the Green camp.

"It will not be surprising at all if, during the APEC meeting slated for September in Sydney, Australia, [U.S. President George W.] Bush seizes the chance of his meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao to criticize Bian - a move that is consistent with Washington's position regarding Taiwan's UN referendum. But the fact that Washington has upgraded its level [of officials] to impose pressure on Taiwan, and that it has hit exactly upon the most humble and fragile part of the Taiwan people - their 'imagination of a nation' - indicates that the United States indeed has no knowledge of the DPP at all, nor does it understand Taiwan well enough. ...

"In terms of the campaigning in Taiwan, Bian's UN referendum has successfully dragged both the United States and China into the game.

In order to maintain its own interests and to yield to China's pressure, Washington has more than once taken the initiative of jumping into the 'offshore battlefield of campaigning' tailor-made by Bian. But will Washington's strongly-worded statements really force A-Bian to back down? Or they will only help to reinforce the inner consensus in the DPP? The answers to these questions are quite obvious.

"The most important bull's eye of Bian's UN referendum, without a doubt, is not UN Resolution No. 2758 but next year's presidential election; likewise, the most intense battlefield is not in New York, but in Taipei. ... As a result, immediately after U.S. National Security Council senior director Dennis Wilder made the strongly-worded remarks, the Blue camp appeared to be deeply worried, while the Presidential Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained silent. Bian's initial strategy has obviously achieved the results he desired."

D) "Americans and Taiwan Independence [Activists] Both Put Aside All Considerations of Face; Neither Should Complain about the Other!"

Kao Hsiung-po, a Taipei-based strategic commentator, opined in the pro-unification "United Daily News" (9/1):

"... For many years, the Taiwan independence force and the United States have been willingly taken advantage of each other; they worked together to restrain the process of modernization on mainland China on the one hand, and to usurp power in Taiwan for political and economic gains on the other. This is a combination of interests in nature, so neither side should complain about the other. Washington has criticized Bian for everything, but in reality it is asking for humiliation itself. Given its powerful national strength, how would the United States be toyed with by Taiwan's pro-independence authorities if it did not harbor evil intentions and willingly collude with the Taiwan independence force?

"Getting to the bottom of this, [one would find that] the reason that the Taiwan independence forces are able to develop in Taiwan is exactly because the United States only cares about its own interests and disregards justice and morality. ... What the United States was aiming at was nothing but to destroy the KMT, which is anti-communist but not anti-China, and to have the anti-China Taiwan independence force to lead Taiwan, in an attempt to restrain mainland China. An inner defect of such an attempt of the United States is that once China's strength grows to a certain extent, the United States' support for Taiwan independence will instead become its burden. ..."

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